

"Assassination Show"

A Mystery Play

by

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CHARACTERS

- THE WATCHER** A middle-aged man who sits in recliner watching a video screen. He is obsessed with the Kennedy assassination, and conspiracies in general, perhaps to the detriment of his relationships with his wife, **THE MOTHER**, and his son, **THE CHILD**.
- THE MOTHER** The wife of **THE WATCHER**, she feels that he neglects their family in his dreamlike obsession with television and the Kennedy Assassination.
- The CHILD** Son of **THE WATCHER** and **THE MOTHER**, **THE CHILD** is approximately ten years old. He is a self-taught student of the presidents and has a strong interest in American History.
- THE SINGER** The master of ceremonies of the show, he sings many of the songs in a variety of costumes and personae. He is a bit of a shape-shifter visually and vocally. He ignores **THE BAND** and is good-naturedly ego-centric in his "ownership" or responsibility for the performance of the play.
- LEE HARVEY OSWALD** The lone assassin of John Kennedy or perhaps only a patsy for a broader conspiracy. He doesn't seem completely clear on the issue.
- THE GYPSY** An old world fortune-teller who also has elements of a Country-and-Western female singer circa the late 1950s. Her age is indeterminate: she could be thirty or could be seventy. She wears plenty of makeup.
- DAVID FERRIE** Associate of conspiracy figures such as Guy Bannister, Carlos Marcello and Lee Harvey Oswald, Ferrie suffers from Alopecia, which he covers up with a red fright wig and thick black

glue-on eyebrows.

- ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER** Amateur filmmaker who is responsible for the famous "Zapruder film" which captures the killshot of John Kennedy. A family man with a 8 mm camera who suffers from mild vertigo.
- SECRETARY** Zapruder's secretary who helps balance her boss on the colonnade as he shoots the footage of the assassination. She wear high heels and a bouffant hairdo.
- INDIO** Mexican native (Or "Indian")-turned CIA "asset" responsible for U.S. Government assassinations in Latin America and self-proclaimed assassin of John Kennedy. He wears a clean white suit which sets off his dark-skin. He is big, muscular and intimidating--clearly a dangerous customer.
- HARVEY OSWALD** LEE HARVEY OSWALD's inter-dimensional identical twin-who is seems to be a cold-blooded, get-the-job-done assassin-compared to his conflicted twin LEE.
- THE TROUBADOUR** An old-style Texas troubadour in a rhinestone-studded country-and-western suit, who lived through the assassination period and even played Jack Ruby's Carousel Club. He is unimpressed by THE SINGER, whom he considers a Johnny-Come-Lately, if not a musical phony, who never paid his dues in the Texas honky tonks. THE TROUBADOUR has an excellent rapport with THE BAND and the audience; he is a beneficent presence, albeit with a sarcastic wit and biting stage repartee.
- JACKIE KENNEDY** First Lady, wife of John Kennedy, who admits his faults, but whose love for him overcomes her feeling of love-hate (due to his serial infidelities). She is privy to his psychological and

physical fragility.

JACK RUBY

Assassin of the Assassin. He is a former bouncer for Al Capone—who now runs his own Carousel Club, a strip bar in Dallas. Though he is Jewish and not a "made member" of the mafia, his connections to mafia leaders Carlos Marcello, Santos Trafficante and Sam Giancana force him into silencing Oswald after the Kennedy Assassination. He is a good boss to his strippers and a good owner to a pair of especially yappy lapdogs.

THE MEN

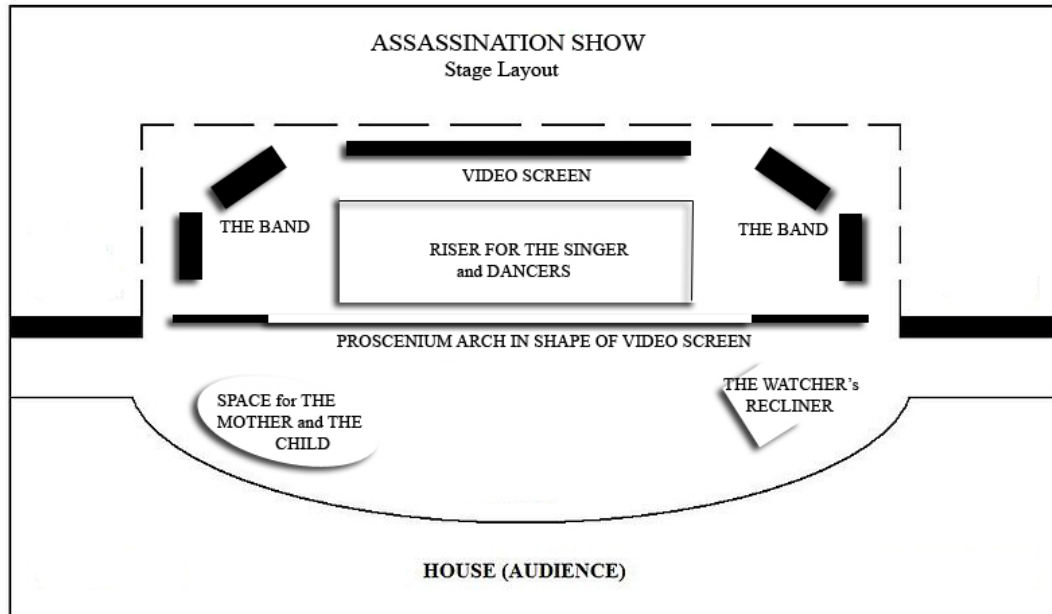
A group of men, increasingly oversized, who sing "The Man Behind the Man," in a single file line. Each one sings a line or two and is replaced by a bigger (and perhaps more monstrous) man behind him. They wear corporate suits, with corporate haircuts with an increasing amount (as they get "bigger") of corporate bling.

THE BAND

The backing band for the show. They appear behind the singers, mostly out of the spotlight, but occasionally singled out during a solo or backup. THE BAND wavers between slavish, unacknowledged servitude toward THE SINGER and rebellious fills and solos to assert individual identities beyond their band member anonymity. The members include: 1) a rhythm guitarist; 2) a standup bass player; 3) a jazz-kit drummer; 4) a lead guitarist/steel guitarist; 5) a piano/keyboard player; 6) a fiddle/mandolin player and 7) three female backup singers, who sway to the music when they are allowed to sing but are otherwise immobile. This ensemble can be augmented by: 1) a tuba player; 2) an accordionist; and 3) a Latin and Country-and Western percussionist.

**SETTING**

THE WATCHER sits in a recliner in front of a gigantic shell of an empty video screen about three quarters the size of the stage—serving almost as a proscenium arch. At the rear of the stage is an actual large-format video screen for projecting photographs and film images. While THE WATCHER seems to be a man, he also has qualities of a god. Things magically appear as his recliner side as he speaks, watches. For instance, a vase of flowers, a bottle of beer, something he smokes, another beer, snack, etc. These magical apparitions appear throughout the action.



**TIME**

Late November, the present.

SCENES

ACT I

Scene	Summary	Singer: Song Title	Time
Scene 1	THE WATCHER in the Living Room with Video Screen. THE SINGER appears onstage within proscenium imitation gigantic "screen." He sings two songs which serve as an overview and introduction to the Assassination Show.	1) THE SINGER: "Screens" 2) THE SINGER: "The Torch"	Present.
Scene 2	THE CHILD enters the stage and joins THE WATCHER. They discuss THE CHILD's interest in presidential history. THE CHILD enjoys the period photos and film of the motorcade but grows disturbed, though, as the MEN sing "Man Behind the Man" and LEE HARVEY OSWALD sings "Lee Harvey Oswald."	3) THE SINGER: "Motorcade" 4) MEN: "Man Behind the Man" 5) LEE HARVEY OSWALD: "The Game"	Present and 1963.
Scene 3	THE GYPSY reads JOHN KENNEDY's Tarot Cards and predicts ruin. Possible assassination conspirator DAVID FERRIE appears. THE MOTHER enters and argues with her husband THE WATCHER for allowing THE CHILD to watch the	6) THE GYPSY: "Everybody's Comin' to Texas" 7) DAVID FERRIE: "The Ballad of David Ferrie"	1963 and Present.

Assassination Show.  
She escorts THE  
CHILD off-stage,  
leaving THE WATCHER  
alone—with the  
decision to turn off  
or continue watching  
the "show."

ACT II

- |         |  |   |                   |
|---------|--|---|-------------------|
| Scene 1 | ABRAHAM ZAPRUDE and SECRETARY film the "killshot." THE SINGER (as John Kennedy) sings the President's moment-of-death song.  | 8) ABRAHAM ZAPRUDE: "Double Eight Millimeter (Zapruder Film)" | 1963              |
|         |  | 9) THE SINGER: "Jack Dying"                                   |                   |
| Scene 2 | THE SINGER explores various Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories including those relating the Cuban Revolution and the Bay of Pigs fiasco. He introduces Corsican hitman Lucian Marti as his personal choice as the Grassy Knoll shooter but is interrupted by INDIO, CIA assassin who wants to take credit for the killing. After INDIO exits, THE SINGER relates the paranormal "Two Oswalds" theory. LEE and HARVEY dance a tango. | 10) THE SINGER: "History Between (Lucian Marti)"              | 1963 and present. |
|         |  | 11) THE SINGER: "Cuba"  |                   |
|         |  | 12) INDIO: "El Indio"   |                   |
|         |  | 13) LEE and HARVEY OSWALD: "Two Oswalds"                      |                   |
| Scene 3 | THE TROUBADOUR enters and sings "The Magic Bullet" with a bullet-costumed kickline. THE SINGER tries to retake the   | 14) JACKIE KENNEDY: "Jackie Kennedy"                          | 1963 and present. |
|         |  | 15) THE TROUBADOUR: "The                                      |                   |

control of the show      Magic Bullet"  
but THE TROUBADOUR  
tells tales of his      16) JACK RUBY:  
actual experience of      "Jack Ruby"  
the assassination and  
acquaintance with  
Jack Ruby. JACK RUBY  
enters and tells his  
role in assassinating  
the assassin Oswald—  
on orders from the  
Mafia. THE CHILD  
reenters the stage  
and watches,  
unbeknownst to THE  
WATCHER.

Scene 4 THE MOTHER enters and 17) THE SINGER:      1963 and  
confronts THE WATCHER "Caissons."      Present.  
for exposing THE  
CHILD to the show's  
violence and  
obscenity—including  
the shots of John  
Kennedy's funeral.      18) THE TROUBADOUR  
However, their      and THE GYPSY:  
animosity is quelled      "Lee and Marina"  
as THE TROUBADOUR and  
THE GYPSY duet the  
love song "Lee and  
Marina"--THE WATCHER  
and THE MOTHER dance  
as THE CHILD watches.  
THE SINGER returns  
and closes out the  
show by singing  
"Dealey Plaza" with  
all the players—  
shedding light and  
darkness on the  
continued mystery and  
meaning of John  
Kennedy's  
assassination.      19) THE SINGER and  
ALL PLAYERS:  
"Dealey Plaza"



ACT I

SCENE 1

{The WATCHER clicks through several programs before he decides to stop on a History Channelesque program on the Assassination of John Kennedy.}

THE WATCHER

I'd almost forgotten. But I should remember from the time of year. It's always this time of year. For this story, that is. Everything's gray, windblown. The old year is running out of gas and the new year is still over a month away. The scenery gotten a little seedy. From Camelot to Scarlet Street. Each year they have a new show and each year a new villain. While Age is constantly destroying Youth. Wasn't it Saturn who devoured his children?

(Goya's painting "Saturn Devouring His Children appears on the video screen.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

Ah, the Flower of Youth. The Sweet Flower. God, what that the name of that movie? Something from the '50s with Robert Mitchum in it. Or a young Brando before he got fat and went to hell.

THE WATCHER (cont.)

(THE WATCHER turns to audience and recognizes individual members with a nod of the head.)

So what's new with you? Nothing? Me too. I guess there's nothing to do here but watch. I'll be watching. And while I'll be watching, you'll be watching me. And while you'll be watching me, I'll watching you and dreaming this dream we all dream in common.

(Goya's painting slowly fades. THE WATCHER addresses audience)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

So, are you with me? (He urges the audience.) Are you WITH me?!

(THE WATCHER nods his head drowsily and

returns his attention to video screen.  
It is static that slowly rises on an  
image of John Kennedy as President. THE  
WATCHER takes a long drink of his beer.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

(To himself)

So you're with me, you're really with me this time.

(His head bends and he seems to nod off.  
He slurs his words.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

Dreaming . . . dreaming . . . .

(The video screen flickers and fades to  
black. A spotlight rises on THE SINGER,  
a white hipster with requisite facial  
hair and pork-pie hat. His face is  
painted white like a white minstrel and  
he wears a scruffy jacket from which a  
pocket watch dangles. He checks his  
pocket watch like the nervousness of the  
White Rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in  
Wonderland*.)

THE SINGER

It's time then. I do believe it's time. Of course  
it's always time.

(He picks up a guitar and plucks strings  
randomly to check their tuning.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

Never was one for too much tuning. It's an  
affectation, I do believe. Most people—including me—  
can't hear even hear the difference. Tone Deaf, they  
are. Reminds me of my band back in high school. "The  
Deaf Mutes" we were.

THE SINGER (cont.)

(reminisces nostalgically)

God, we were horrible. But we did get laid.

THE SINGER (cont.)

(to audience)

And wasn't that the point? Isn't that always the  
point, just like it's always time. Generating and  
regenerating, generating and regenerating—like rabbits.  
To prove that we have been, are and always will be *here*.

(He points to the floor, center stage.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

Even if we think we're over there.

(He nods to THE WATCHER asleep in his recliner.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

Always sleeping, always dreaming. When he wakes, I sleep, when he sleeps I dream.

(THE SINGER starts strumming his guitar and THE BAND joins, spots coming up on them in the background. While THE BAND is aware of THE SINGER, THE SINGER is not aware of THE BAND.)

THE SINGER

(sings the song "Screens" as an kind of introduction or overture)

"Screens"

I'm watching screens  
it's passing like a dream  
and they're killing John Kennedy

it happens once a year  
far gone but somehow near  
and the doubts all disappear

His wife is by his side  
slow-motion limo ride  
as it is and isn't time

cause he's too young to die  
but he's like Jesus Christ  
and no one knows why  
no one knows just why

and the men wear hats  
and the women all wear skirts  
and every child is safe,  
waves to the motorcade,  
and no one can get hurt

and the villains change  
the plot rearranged

and the odds get long and strange

colors washed and faded  
theories debunked debated  
and the assassin assassinated  
assassin assassinated

kennedy dies in color  
oswald in black-and-white  
oswald dies  
and it's broadcast live  
in black-and-white

I'm watching screens  
it's passing like a dream  
and they're killing John Kennedy

it happens once a year  
far gone but somehow near  
maybe this time it'll all be clear

Kennedy dies in color  
Oswald in black-and-white

(Stage fades to black. Spotlight rises on the THE WATCHER, who stirs in his recliner. On the video screen a montage of John Kennedy photographs and film clips appear. They follow his life from childhood, Choate/Harvard, World War II, politics, liaisons with stars and starlets, marriage to Jackie Bouvier, bookwriting, his own children.

#### THE WATCHER

Son of a bitch, who wouldn't want to be that guy? To trade places? Son of the richest bastard in the country—Choate, Harvard, the war hero. I mean, who doesn't know those PT-109, just because of him? A nothing boat really. And he makes himself a hero out of it. Course maybe he just screwed up and got blindsided by a Jap destroyer. Back then they called them "Japs," not exactly PC, I guess. But we dropped two atom bombs on the sons of bitches before they cried "uncle." And we needed heroes for the post-war orgy. Guilt, victory--not that far apart, really.

(THE WATCHER pauses the montage on a picture of John Kennedy shirtless in his PT-109 boat.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

Nobody exactly factchecked Jack Kennedy's story. His old man Joe had the press in his back pocket, anyway. Time-Life, the Luce Nazis. Back then you could "control things." Maybe you still can.

(THE WATCHER clicks the montage back on and images continue.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

Jack Kennedy moved magazines. Like a movie star, except this is the guy's "real life." A playboy. Starlets, stars. Turned politician because he had to do something productive to pay off the old man's investment--certainly not "write books"--or have them ghostwritten for him. Still, he went into politics with some kind of conscience. You have to believe that. Or this story really makes absolutely no sense. Maybe he had some kind of vision that the old man's flacks had helped him to flesh out. America. Idealized, sure. Like something out of the movies. Corny, yeah, but something that would stick your gut. He was real. Seemed real. And was minted in gold.

(The montage on the video screen ends. The stage fades to black and a spotlight appears on THE SINGER, dressed as a gold-suited '50s-style teen idol, flanked by two POLYNESIAN GIRLS, who sway in grass-skirts and shake coconut-shaped maracas.)

THE SINGER

(He sings "The Torch.")

"The Torch"

the men came home  
from the good war  
the peace is made  
the baby boom is born

we all drive-in  
lose our innocence  
big breasts and big business  
and big cars with bigger fins

We want to be  
Jack Kennedy

**American  
Aristocracy**

he's got the grin  
and he's rich as sin  
he won the war on a PT boat  
now he's president

he's better looking  
than a movie star  
and his wife Jackie  
purrs like a jaguar

we'll stop the reds  
we'll right our wrongs  
we'll fly to the moon  
and not just in Sinatra's song

we'll live the dream  
that good men died for  
we'll light this dark  
and broken world  
with a burning torch  
burn

(The stage fades to black. A spotlight lights a paper moon hanging from above. A hand holds a "torch" made from flashlight and colored tissue paper (and a small fan to make the tissue move like flames. The hand turns the torch on and it lights up, "flames" dancing as the spotlight on the moon fades. After a moment the torch goes out and the stage fades to black.

SCENE 2

(The spotlights reveals THE CHILD who enters stage left and takes a seat stage left on the floor—opposite the stage from THE WATCHER, his father. THE CHILD is about ten years old and sits indian-style, his elbows on his knees, his head propped on his knuckles. A similar spotlight reveals THE WATCHER, still in his recliner, who takes notice of him but doesn't say anything. THE CHILD is unobtrusive—like a smaller-sized shadow of his father. THE WATCHER and THE CHILD each wait for the other to break the silence, but it hangs in the air for an uneasy moment.)

THE WATCHER

(slightly irritated)

You know all your presidents, don't you, boy?

THE CHILD

Yes, sir.

THE WATCHER

That's good.

THE CHILD

You want be to recite them? Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, another Adams, Jackson, Van Buren . . . .

(He's lost for a second, but before he continue THE WATCHER interrupts).

THE WATCHER

So who was the 35<sup>th</sup> President?

THE CHILD

(mechanically)

John Fitzgerald Kennedy. And his Vice-President was Lyndon Baines Johnson, who became the 36<sup>th</sup> President.

THE WATCHER

(warming)

That's good. What was Kennedy most known for?

THE CHILD

(earnestly)

He created the New Frontier and decided that we should put a man on the moon.

THE WATCHER

Good!

THE CHILD

He was also the fourth President to be assassinated. The others were Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley.

THE WATCHER

You know your stuff. I'm proud of you. This show's about Kennedy. (Awkwardly) The assassination.

THE CHILD

He was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald. Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, Garfield by Charles . . . I don't know how to say his last name-- it's like guitar. And an anarchist shot McKinley. Daddy, what's an anarchist?

THE WATCHER

They're crazy people. They don't believe in anything. No laws, no government. People just living like wild animals.

THE CHILD

(scared)

Are there anarchists today?

THE WATCHER

(comforting him)

No, that was back in the old days. They aren't around any more.

THE CHILD

Was Lee Harvey Oswald an anarchist?

THE WATCHER

I don't think so. I think he was confused.

THE CHILD

Was he crazy?

THE WATCHER

I guess anybody that would take a shot at the President of the United States would have to be at least a little crazy.



THE CHILD

(unsatisfied)

Is that what this show's about?

THE WATCHER

Sort of. Where's your mom?

THE CHILD

Upstairs.

THE WATCHER

I don't think she'd want you watching this.

THE CHILD

But I want to know more about the presidents.

THE WATCHER

This show isn't for children.

THE CHILD

But it's about a president.

THE WATCHER

It gets a little graphic. You don't need to see that.

THE CHILD

I've seen scary movies. Mom lets me watch them.

THE WATCHER

This isn't movie, exactly.

THE CHILD

Please, dad.

THE WATCHER

Alright, you can watch a little bit. Maybe to the next commercial. But it's coming back on.

(A montage on the the video screen shows still photographs and film of the motorcade winding like a slow black caterpillar through the Dallas streets. Parts of the montage are in black-and-white and parts in color.)

THE CHILD

(fidgeting)

What's that?

THE WATCHER

That's the motorcade. Be still and watch.

THE CHILD

Yes, sir.

(The video screen fades to black and the spotlight comes up on THE SINGER. He is now a long-haired, blue-jeaned 1970s singer-songwriter playing an acoustic guitar as he perches languidly on a bar stool. He is the soul of earnestness and simplicity in his childlike reverie. THE BAND joins in after the first verse, but THE SINGER is so self-absorbed in his memory that he takes no notice of them. In fact, he sings most of the song with his eyes closed to shut out the world around him. He gently strums a few opening chords and then sings "The Motorcade" in an upper register.)

THE SINGER

(He sings "The Motorcade.")

"The Motorcade"

School's for the day  
we've lined up  
for the parade  
I'm sitting on my daddy's shoulders  
watching the crawl of the motorcade

The air smells like lemonade  
everyone screams as he smiles and waves  
he looks just like the pictures  
he's the president of the United States

can you see, daddy screams  
son, this is history  
and I say, yes  
they look just a king and queen

it was now but now is fast  
I watch the last troopers in their tall  
hats  
they slip around the corner  
dipping into the past

(Stage fades to black. Spotlight rises on

a series of increasingly large men in suits that could be businessmen, mobsters or politicians. The stand in a single file line, each stepping forward and singing a line or two of the song "Man Behind the Man"--before exiting, alternately stage left and stage right. Each man is bigger and more monstrous looking than the one before him.)

THE MEN

(The men sing "The Man Behind the Man.")

"The Man Behind the Man"

I am the man behind the man  
behind the man  
who killed Jack Kennedy

I pulled I tied the knot  
what bastard deserved  
I made sure he got

you never seen my face  
you heard my name  
I never pulled the trigger  
but I killed him just the same

Most people are stupid  
like little kids naïve  
they want a story  
simple enough to believe

So let's raise a glass  
smoke a big cigar  
pulled off the American coup d'etat

I am the man behind the man  
behind the man  
behind the man  
behind the man

(THE CHILD is enraptured but horrified.  
The WATCHER doesn't notice THE CHILD's  
reaction until the song ends.)

THE WATCHER

Go on, now. I told you this wasn't a kid's show!

THE CHILD

Who was that man?

THE WATCHER

Nobody knows. Go on, before your mother comes down and we both catch hell.

THE CHILD

(numbly)

John Kennedy was a president . . . .

THE WATCHER

He was a man too. They all are.

THE CHILD

But I read . . . Lee Harvey Oswald . . . Why would they . . . want to kill the president?

THE WATCHER

You gotta realize . . . .

(He searches for the right word.)

It's what people *think* happened. Nobody knows. Nobody knows anything. Nobody knows anything . . for sure.

(He falls silent and introspective at the thought.)

THE CHILD

But I read . . . Lee Harvey Oswald . . . was crazy. He was *crazy, wasn't he?*

THE WATCHER:

(mechanically)

Yes, he was. He acted alone. He was the lone gunman.

THE CHILD

Why would he kill the president? Unless he was crazy?

THE WATCHER

(reluctantly)

That's right.

(The spotlights go down on THE WATCHER and THE CHILD—leaving them again in silhouette. A montage of Lee Harvey Oswald appears on the video screen. Pictures include the photograph of Oswald holding his pamphlet and Mannlicher rifle, Oswald causing a disturbance in

New Orleans, Oswald the husband, lover, father, the young Oswald, Marine Oswald, Civil Air Patrol Oswald, Oswald mug shot in which he is wearing a t-shirt and has a black eye-like. The frame freezes on the final image. A spotlight rises on LEE HARVEY OSWALD, in t-shirt and black-eye. He prowls the stage moodily, gesturing at his own shadows for effect, as he sings "The Game."

LEE HARVEY OSWALD

(Lee Harvey Oswald sings "The Game.")

"The Game"

If you're looking for reasons  
you won't understand  
I'm not a hero  
just an underground man  
underground man  
with his life in both hands  
and love hard as hatred  
that none understand

I went for a soldier  
swallowed the lie  
tried to desert  
to the other side  
but the other side  
turned out just the same  
and I found we were players  
in someone else's game

I've taken the game  
and I'm making it mine  
and if I can win  
John Kennedy dies

I love my Marina  
and my little girl  
this game that I'm playing  
can stop the whole world  
stop the whole world  
for one moment in time  
but if I succeed  
I'll probably die

I've taken the game  
and I'm making it mine

and if I succeed  
I know I must die

(The stage fades to black.)

SCENE 3

(The spotlights rise on THE GYPSY. She has a gold tooth and eye-patch, but is dressed as a cross between a fortune-teller and a early 1960s era singing cowgirl. She speaks with an accent that is half Transylvanian and half Texan. She is shuffling a deck of tarot cards are shuffled on a table. An overhead camera projects the table onto the video screen behind her—providing a closeup of the cards. Thirteen cards are placed face down in a circle on a green felt table. The one placed face down in the center. A female hand turns it face up: it is The "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" inverted. She turns the card right side up. As she speaks, or prophesies, THE BAND makes eerie, weather-like music like an aeolian harp almost conforming at time into melody.)

THE GYPSY

I see a great change. A great change for a great man. Coming in from the west like a Texas tornado. A tempest upon the land. There will be great damage. A desolation. In the death of one the dreams of many--

(She sighs fearfully and breaks off. She continues more matter-of-factly—as if reining in her vision.)

THE GYPSY (cont.)

It is an unlucky card. Especially when inverted. The King will change places. With a Corpse.

(She waves her hand over the card as if extracting its arcane knowledge. As she speaks, a steel guitar punctuates her prophecy with discordant sounds.)

THE GYPSY (cont.)

I see great crowds of people. Pointing in different directions. They are wandering about the streets. Like unto the dead. They are undone.

THE CHILD

I'm getting scared.

THE WATCHER

(mesmerized)

I told you this wasn't for kids. Go on upstairs now.

(He shoos THE CHILD off ineffectually,  
but THE CHILD remains seated.)

THE GYPSY

I see the second one become the first. And I see the loser the winner. And I can make out a third man too. He is in the shadows, but he too will rise. That is how this wheel works. The wheel of fortune turns—it can do nothing else, it must turn, cannot stop for long or stay still, but turns. It raises up the low and lowers the great lower than the grave. So saith the Son of Man, 'The first shall be last and the last shall be first.' So saith He, He saith so. [Chanting] So saith He, He saith so, So saith He, He saith SO!"

(The spotlights reveal THE BAND in Country-and-Western white cowboy suits—rhinestones, spangled white boots and red neckerchiefs. They begin to play the song "Everybody's Goin' to Texas." THE GYPSY steps away from her reading table and to the mike and sings lead. During the song, a pair of clapping hands appears on the screen behind her. They are white hands in black gloves at first. Then black hands in white gloves. Each keep the beat to give the song an early television hootenanny feel.)

THE GYPSY (cont.)

(THE GYPSY sings "Everybody's Goin' to Texas.")

"Everybody's Goin' to Texas"

Everybody's goin' to Texas  
they all got the reason why  
everybody's goin' to Texas  
but only one man is goin' to die

Cubans, crazies and Ku-Kluxers  
wiseguys playing ball with the FBI  
everybody's goin' to Texas  
but only one man is goin' to die

Dallas is a hitman's dream



the congregation clog the street  
they're gonna put on quite a show  
from the sixth floor window  
to the grassy knoll

paparazzi bulbs a-poppin'  
buzzards filling up the sky  
everybody's goin' to Texas  
but only one man is goin' to die

Dallas is a hitman's dream  
from the Mob or the Company  
cars slow, shots clean  
nobody will even know what they've seen

the gypsy's got a gold tooth  
and one good eye  
there goin' to be a lesson taught  
in politics, Texas style

Nixon and Bush Senior  
LBJ on the inside  
Four presidents in Texas  
but only of them is gonna die

Dallas is a hitman's dream  
just listen to thst crowd scream  
from the Badgeman to the Police Chief  
nothing here is what it seems

everybody's goin'  
everybody  
everybody's goin'  
everybody

(The stage fades to black. A photograph of DAVID FERRIE slowly fades in on the video screen—at first blurry, but coming into focus. The black-and-white photo also slowly adds color. His black eyebrows are clearly painted on and his red-carpet wig glows. THE CHILD pulls back instinctively in fear, horror. The next photograph shows FERRIE and OSWALD in the Louisiana Air Guard. Each is circled in red in the black-and-white photograph and identified. This is the great missing link to a conspiracy. Proof that Oswald at least inhabited the same space and time as Ferrie, who had

connections with both the mob and the CIA.)

THE WATCHER

(Thinking aloud but also explaining to THE CHILD)

Now *this* is important. More important than anything else. Except for maybe the Zapruder film. That's the holy grail.

THE CHILD

What's the Holy Grail?

THE WATCHER

It's nothing. It's not for kids.

THE CHILD

Who is that in the picture?

THE WATCHER

See, that's Oswald over there. And the guy here is David Ferrie.

THE CHILD

The man with the red hair?

THE WATCHER

That's him. David Ferrie.

THE CHILD

Is he real?

THE WATCHER

(with flat affect, but almost proud of his son's curiosity)

Ugly but plenty real.

THE CHILD

He looks more like a monster than a fairy. But monsters aren't real. And fairies aren't real, either. Are they?

THE WATCHER

This fairy was real. And he was hooked up with some pretty bad people. Oswald too. You see, they knew each other. They're in the same picture here. That connects the dots. Because it's a picture. Just watch.

(The spotlights reduce THE WATCHER and THE CHILD to silhouettes. DAVID FERRIE

appears in spotlight on the stage-- grotesque eyebrows and red shag carpet hairpiece. The video screen plays a montage of Ferrie and his associates: photographs and film clips include those of Ferrie and mafiaosi such as Sam Giancana, Santos Trafficante and Carlos Marcello--as well photos and clips of the mob's drug-smuggling and gun-running businesses in Cuba and Central America. A model Eastern Airline DC-10 plane circles above FERRIE's head. FERRIE sings "The Ballad of David Ferrie" in a pre-folk Bobby Darrin-mode (with shades of "Mack the Knife"). FERRIE seems quite comfortable singing about himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, which seems appropriate considering his general shadiness as a human being.)

DAVID FERRIE

(He sings "The Ballad of David Ferrie.")

"The Ballad of David Ferrie"

He flew with Oswald  
in the Air Patrol  
claimed there was nothing  
he didn't know

Some rare disease made him  
lose all his hair  
glued on his eyebrows  
just like a pair  
(of black caterpillars)

He's the greatest mystery  
in American history  
the one, the only,  
David Ferrie

Flew boys on Eastern  
'till he lost his job  
flew guns for the Company  
and drugs for the Mob

Kept his fingers on Lee  
and his feelers on Guy  
kept his apartment full of white lab rats  
with pink eyes

He's the greatest mystery  
in American history  
the one, the only,  
David Ferrie

a twisted life on a crooked street  
where the cops and the hookers meet  
and one plus one plus one  
don't make three

Split out of Dallas  
the day that Big Brother died  
two boys and a roller rink  
were his alibi

well the D.A. indicted  
but it was too late to talk  
they found him head in the john  
dead of a rare blood clot

He's the greatest mystery  
in American history  
the one, the only,  
David Ferrie

one plus one plus one  
one plus one plus one  
one plus one plus one

(As song ends, the stage fades to black.  
Spotlights rise on THE CHILD, who sits  
mute, traumatized, and THE WATCHER  
becomes aware of him and shuts off the  
video screen.)

THE WATCHER

Boy, you okay?

THE CHILD

I don't understand. Lee Harvey Oswald . . . .

THE WATCHER

(desperately)

Look, you go upstairs now. Your mother . . . .

(A dark shadow appears stage left; then  
THE MOTHER enters. She kneels and puts  
her arms around her son.)

THE MOTHER

What's the matter, big boy? Tell your mother.

THE WATCHER

I didn't let him. I didn't know he was sitting there.

THE MOTHER

(with a long-burning core of anger)

Whatever you do, don't you dare lie to me. Can't you see you've traumatized the child?!

THE CHILD

(nonsensically)

Mama, Lee Harvey Oswald . . . killed John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He was the 35<sup>th</sup> president. He discovered "The New Frontier."

THE MOTHER

(stroking THE CHILD's hair)

That's right, my big boy. You're right.

THE WATCHER

I told him to go upstairs . . . . I told him.

THE MOTHER

You don't even know. How sad this is.

THE WATCHER

Sad?! I think I know sad. I wasn't much younger than him . . . .

THE MOTHER

It's idiotic! And cruel. Obsessive! It's child abuse.

THE WATCHER

(slightly narcoleptic)

Because I dare to think for myself? Because I don't buy the generations of lies? Oh yeah, I'm crazy. I abuse my only child.

THE MOTHER

You do, and you don't even know it!

THE WATCHER

(waking)

Don't you raise your voice with me! I can hear you.

THE MOTHER

(more quietly, but steely)

Then why on earth would you let him watch this  
brainrot?!

THE WATCHER

They haven't shown anything! Not yet. I wouldn't let  
him see . . . .

THE CHILD

Mama, Lee Harvey Oswald was crazy. Isn't that right?

THE MOTHER

(cradling THE CHILD)

Of course, of course.

THE CHILD

That's what I thought. Don't you and daddy argue . . .  
. He was just crazy.

THE MOTHER

Honey, we're not arguing.

THE WATCHER

No, son, we're not. You shouldn't watch this kind of  
program. It's for adults.

THE MOTHER

Your daddy doesn't need to watch it either.

THE WATCHER

(suppressing his rage)

No, I don't need to either.

(THE MOTHER stands up and lifts THE CHILD  
almost like a marionette--carrying him--  
his stick legs dangling.)

THE MOTHER

It's time you were in bed. Let's go upstairs. You  
need to sleep.

THE CHILD

(offering weak resistance)

I don't want to go to sleep. I want to learn about the  
presidents. I need to learn everything.

THE MOTHER

Not tonight. You need sleep.

(THE MOTHER shoots a fierce glance at THE WATCHER.)

THE MOTHER (cont.)

Your father will be up to tuck you in.

THE WATCHER

That's right. Do what your mother says. I'll be up in a minute.

THE CHILD

I want to watch the rest of the show. Turn it back on.

THE WATCHER

(under THE MOTHER's baleful glare)

It's off, boy. We're all going to bed. Your mother and I too.

THE MOTHER

That's right, we have to sleep.

(She looks with accusation at THE WATCHER.)

THE MOTHER (cont.)

Unless someone keeps us up with his bad dreams.

THE WATCHER

No one's going to have any bad dreams!

THE MOTHER

(sarcastically)

Nooo! Of course not!

THE WATCHER

The screen's off!

THE CHILD

Mommy, I don't want you and daddy to fight.

THE WATCHER

(angrily)

Boy, get upstairs with your mother. Now!

(THE MOTHER shakes her head in disgust and comforts THE CHILD. She carries him off stage-left. THE WATCHER sits up in his recliner and looks stage left and then at the dark screen.)

THE WATCHER

Dammit, dammit, dammit, dammit! And once again *I'm* the bad guy. It's not like I made this stuff up. It's not like I shot JFK! No, I just want to know the simple truth. Well, the truth, simple or not. (pause) And that makes me *crazy, obsessive*. Jesus, Mary and Joseph! (pause) No, I'll just turn my brain over to the government. I'll swear an oath with my right hand on the Report the Warren Commission. Oswald was a nut. A lone gunman. He didn't know David Ferrie, a known mob associate. Or Guy Bannister, an ex-FBI agent turned CIA asset on the secret war with Castro.

THE WATCHER (cont.)

(He adopts a mock Irish cop accent)  
No conspiracy here, just move along there, boyos.

THE WATCHER (cont.)

(He reverts back to his own voice.)  
Bay of Pigs fiasco? Nothing there. The Holy Trinity of the Mob--Sam Giancana, Carlos Marcello and Santos Trafficante? Nothing there. CIA black ops and big war money percolating in Vietnam? Nothing there. LBJ? No, of course, nothing there.

(He pauses and almost stands--almost extricates himself from his recliner.)

THE WATCHER (cont.)

America is land of the just, the home of the true. The rich and powerful don't own us. Lincoln abolished slavery. It's an even playing field, everybody has their three swings at the American Dream. It's not a fraud, not a rigged game, not a casino run of, by and for the super rich. No, this is America. We don't slaughter our presidents in the open air. Like gladiators in the coliseum. Thumbs up, thumbs down!

(THE WATCHER turns the video screen back on--using his thumb on the remote. Triumphantly. On the black screen a white-lettered title appears: "Up Next: The Most Important Film in American History." This title slowly dissolves and a new one scrolls in: "And it only lasts 27 seconds--less than your average commercial." The video screen fades to black and then the stage fades to black as THE WATCHER settles back in his seat to wait for the rest of the ride.)



ACT II

SCENE 1

(The video screen shows the Zapruder film. Original speed at first, but stopping before it gets to the Killshot. It plays in a loop--each time more slowly, gradually making its way to the Killshot.)

During the Zapruder film looping, ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER appears with his zoomatic Bell and Howell camera around his neck. He is stand on a narrow riser, practicing, with his SECRETARY behind him, balancing him, taking shots.

As they perform this acrobatic "dance," or "balancing act," he lowers the camera, raises it again, several times as he performs the song "ZAPRUDER FILM."

When the song reaches the Killshot, the Zapruder film comes to a violent stop. It only begins to move again, slowly, looping, as Jackie Kennedy tries to exit the vehicle and is forced back in by the Secret Service Agent and the limo disappears under the triple underpass.)

ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER

(He sings "Double Eight Millimeter.)

"Double Eight Millimeter (Zapruder Film)"

I bought a bell and howell camera  
with the zoomatic lens  
to remember our little lives  
family friends and kids

double eight millimeter  
pistol grip, thumb trigger  
built-in electric eye  
it won't let you take  
a bad picture  
cause pictures don't lie

my secretary called to me

grab your camera mr z  
the president and his motorcade  
are coming right our way

we climbed up the colonnade  
beside the Grassy Knoll  
Marilyn held me from behind  
because of my vertigo

double eight millimeter  
pistol grip, thumb trigger  
built-in electric eye  
it won't let you take  
a bad picture  
cause pictures don't lie

first shot he grabbed his throat  
I thought he laughed or choked  
second shot I watched him die  
as his head explode

I made it back to my office  
like a man in a dream  
locked the camera in the vault  
sold it to Time Magazine

but I suffered terrific nightmares  
for months and months on end  
the image burned into my brain  
playing over and over again

double eight millimeter  
pistol grip, thumb trigger  
built-in electric eye  
it won't let you take  
a bad picture  
cause pictures don't lie

(As the song ends, ZAPRUDER stumbles off  
his riser on a dais. His SECRETARY, in  
high heels, remains stranded on the  
dais.)

SECRETARY

What happened?!

(ZAPRUDER mumbles incoherently but holds  
the camera with both hands as if his life  
depended on it. He wanders up and down

the stage and almost falls off the front. The SECRETARY climbs off the riser and breaks a heel. She hobbles comically after ZAPRUDER.)

SECRETARY

Mr. Z, are you alright?!

ZAPRUDER

(disoriented)

I'm fine . . . Marilyn. I'm going back. To the office. We've got to go back.

SECRETARY

I didn't see. I heard something. Firecrackers? Texans are so rude!

ZAPRUDER

I didn't see either. I was watching, but I didn't see.

SECRETARY

(suddenly aware of the chaos around them)

Look at all these people! What's going on? I hope it didn't hurt your camera. It's expensive.

ZAPRUDER

(holding the camera tightly)

It's fine. I'm pretty sure it is.

(ZAPRUDER wanders toward the front of the stage, but the SECRETARY grabs him by the arm before he falls off.

SECRETARY

Mr. Z. Mr. Z.? I don't know what's happening. This is crazy. I've never seen people act like this!

ZAPRUDER

The office . . . .

(The SECRETARY leads ZAPRUDER by the arm as they exit stage left.

SECRETARY

I blame myself. We should have stayed at the office. I didn't see a thing.

(They wander off stage. The lights fades except for a sole spotlight at center stage. THE SINGER appears, wearing a John

Kennedy Mask.)

THE SINGER

Of course she didn't see a thing. No one saw it. But I did. You don't believe me? I felt the first one. It tore through my vocal chords like a hornet-sting. I couldn't speak. I wanted to gag, throw up, but my windpipe was shattered. I could hear the wind suck in as I took a breath. I tried to tell Jackie. To get down.

But I saw the second one. It came straight in. In super-slow-motion. Too slow for me to move. I'd heard about these "killshot" bullets in the war. They said a dead man could see the bullet that had his number of it. I didn't believe it then. But I did now.

It was bronze-tipped. Lethal. A good shot really. Headed right between my eyes. It had destiny written on it. I suppose it was the bullet I was supposed to get in the war. Instead of my older brother Joe.

Joe was supposed to be president. Because dad couldn't be. I never wanted to ride the political Ferris wheel. Up and down. Up and down. Getting in bed with a satyr like Lyndon Johnson. To be president—for the old man.

So I watched that bullet come in, so slowly, with the slight arc of Carl Hubbell fastball. You know it's going to hit, and you think, 'this is gonna hurt,' but when it hits, you don't really have time to feel it at all. Because it's already gone through you. It just feels like a balloon that you're letting the air out of. It makes this dying squeal and flies every which way, getting smaller and smaller. And you realize: 'Oh, *that is me.*'

(THE SINGER removes his John Kennedy mask and sings "Jack Dying.")

"Jack Dying"

I always thought that I  
should have died over water  
Pacific water  
where the blue shark dive

But I came home to my father  
in the robe of my brother  
to a blood destiny

ghostwritten for me

now it feels so fine  
with the wind in my face  
falling higher  
like sunlight into space

I can see each face,  
each tear, rolls down each cheek  
and I just want to tell them  
that it's not really me

now it feels so easy  
with the wind in my face  
though I'm falling higher, faster,  
than sunlight in space

(The stage fades to black. The video  
screen shows a proton particle in slow-  
motion speeding through space, then fade  
to black as well.)

SCENE 2

(Fade in on THE SINGER, dressed as an film noir private eye, with fedora and trenchcoat. The lighting is noirish.)

SINGER

I've seen that clip a million times--and I bet you have too--but you don't get used to it. Nobody does. It's like an M-80 blowing up a watermelon. And poor Jackie Kennedy trying to climb out of the limo--and it's speeding up . . . and Abe Zapruder does what any good camera-man would do: he follows the action--right until the limo disappears under the triple underpass and into history. He doesn't drop the camera, he doesn't ask, "What the hell just happened?" No, he just watches. Like we just watch. If there's a hell, I'm sure it's full of watching.

We watch and wonder. Wonder what Jack Kennedy himself was thinking. After the first shot--before the second, the *killshot*--Geez, what a horribly descriptive word. Wonder, is there time for a last thought? Wonder, as he slips in the wink of an eye from man to ghost. Wonder, what that ghost does, what it haunts. Wonder, the Grassy Knoll, the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Book Depository (now a museum, folks). Wonder, why ghosts hang around at all except to get answers, right? Not museum answers, either.

(An overview photograph of Dealey Plaza--with appropriate markings--at the time of the motorcade killshot appears on the video screen--which THE SINGER uses a laser pointer to makes references.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

So we've got our ghost and we've got our classic mystery. Closed door mystery, only this is in the open air. Kennedy's right here (points laser) when he gets shot. The sixth floor of the Book Depository is here (points laser). But the back of Kennedy's head gets shot off. That's consistent with a shot from here (points laser): the Grassy Knoll. The most famous *knoll* is history. Let the experts argue physics, but why, tell me *why*, did people watching the motorcade, closest to it, who eyeballed the killshot, run *toward* the Grassy Knoll?

(THE SINGER takes off hat and puts it over his heart.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

That's right, these bastards, after they ducked and covered, ran *toward* the Grassy Knoll. It kinda makes you proud to be an American--these bastards actually *ran toward* the spot where they heard shot coming from. Not just one or two, but dozens of them. Maybe because they were still close to World War II, Korea. Hell, the Civil War. Some asshole's shooting at us, charge!!

(THE SINGER puts his hat back on and dips it over one eye.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

But they didn't find anything. Just confusion. The shooters gone. Vanished more completely than even a ghost!

(THE SINGER walks in a circle, that becomes tighter and tighter as he talks.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

Course over the years some names have been named. Usually after the "name" is dead and gone. But these names are pros. Not amateurs like Oswald--with his World War I comic book rifle. No, Mafia hitmen, CIA hitmen. Not that there was much difference at the time. Everybody now knows about the crazy Mob-Company collaborations in Cuba, their paradise lost to Castro and his consigliere Che. Assassination attempts on the Beard. Cuban exile training grounds in Florida, Arkansas. Failed invasions. The Bay of Pigs? If the Kennedy Assassination is *anything*, it has to be payback for Kennedy for Cuba. Because even the monsters of the mafia, even the butttdown men between behind the glass walls of the United Fruit Company dream . . . .

(THE SINGER sings "Cuba" in Sinatra-meets-Jobim style.)

"Cuba"

Cuba, wonderful Cuba  
beautiful Cuba  
they tried to steal you  
away from me  
your mango lips  
and your crescent hips

of your deep brown body

Cuba, succulent Cuba  
decadent Cuba  
they tried to take  
my casinos  
bananas groves  
my after hours club  
that never close  
with the two-bit whores  
and the donkey show

and the drag queen  
high on mescaline  
singing "Anything Goes"

Cuba, it's always Cuba  
my lost Cuba  
I'm win you back some day  
gone clip the Beard  
or Jack the K  
gonna do whatever it takes  
Cuba  
Cuba  
Cuba

#### THE SINGER

Yeah, JFK had not learned the one simple lesson: you don't fuck with Cubans—not to mention the Mob and the CIA. That's one helluva triumvirate. Cuban exiles hate you because you screwed them at the Bay of Pigs. The Mob hates you because you screwed the Cuban exiles. And the CIA hates you because you don't realize that these boys are actually running the show. You're just Washington window dressing, Jack. The Company's been assassinating half of Latin America since World War II. And they're clever and sneaky as hell. They've been to the Ivy League schools, too, Jack. Actually studied while you were chasing tail. And they don't like you or your Old Man. Especially the Old Man.

Plus, they know how to put on a show. They've been doing it for decades! They place their patsy on the scene. Oswald. A loser straight out of Central Casting. Idealist, anarchist, communist, double-agent, triple-agent, egomaniac with a thirst for destiny. They give him just enough information to hang himself. And then trust their pros to do the job right and get the hell out in the chaos.



So who pulled the trigger on the killshot? Oswald—an amateur? Three shots at a moving target in seven seconds—with two hits?! Not hardly. No, this was a professional job. And you want a name? There's at least a dozen possibles but, me, my personal favorite is Lucien Marti, a Corsican hitman by way of Marseilles.

(Video screen show pictures of smiling Lucien Marti.)

THE SINGER (cont.)

Not only does he have hitman written all over him, but look at that smile. This guy's a stone killer. It makes total sense for the Mob and the Company to bring in a guy totally off the radar. Hell, the bastard doesn't even speak English! But he can shoot—and a bullet speaks the universal language.

THE SINGER

(He sings "History Between.")

"History Between"

Flew into Mexico  
from Marseilles  
right over Cuba  
didn't sleep the whole way

Got it mapped out in my mind  
with my time window  
one clean shot  
maybe two  
and then I watch the limo wheels  
roll, roll, roll

It's just him and me  
and history between

cannot stand the smoke  
of these American cigarettes  
but I smoke them anyway  
when they're all that you can get

And I don't really need this bed  
or these starch hotel sheets  
all I really need for now  
is a place that I can be

It's just him and me

and history between

everybody's got their job  
he's got his and I got mine  
but the Good Lord above  
knows when it is your time  
when it is your time  
when it is your time

(INDIO, a large dark-skinned Mexican in a white suit, prowls menacingly--like a wrestler--around THE SINGER as he finishes singing. INDIO chases THE SINGER off and takes his place center stage.)

INDIO

What does a singer now? With his songs and melodies and theories? He and his frenchman were never there. But I was. In Dallas. And the Bay of Pigs too. I saw my brothers cut to pieces by machine-gun fire and left like bloody chub bobbing the shallow water--drawing the sharks in. Those of us left, we hunkered down. We waited.

(He mimes these actions as he speaks.)

INDIO (cont.)

Kennedy, we asked, send in the air support. Kennedy, we begged, send in the air support. Kennedy, we prayed, air support! But there was no air support. We were captured. Held and tortured. "Liberated" a year later--exchanged for missiles in secret. Cuban Missile Crisis, shit! It was a stage-play. The Soviets got everything they wanted and the Haircut got to brag. That's what we called Kennedy, the Haircut. And a lot of other names you wouldn't say in a stage-play. With ladies and gentlemen like you in attendance.

No, I, I am Indio. Born in Mexico, but brought up in the USA by Poppy Bush and the CIA. I worked Guatemala, Nicaragua. Angry peasants and the Fruit Companies. Well, the Fruit Companies paid, the CIA paid, so I worked for them. The peasants don't pay--and they shoot you in the back for twenty dollars.

Cuba was no different. Only this time we fight for the Sugar Planters and Casinos. Get rid of this Castro, the Beard. And his flunky, Che. Revolutionaries! Shit, they couldn't fight their way out of a Tijuana

bar. Couldn't beat up a Tijuana hooker. But the Hair-cut had no cojones. He let them win. He had no stomach for the fight. He was born with a silver prick up his ass. No air support. My comrades floating in the Bay of Pigs like chub.

So you ask, who killed Kennedy? I did! I had the killshot. You want to talk conspiracy. I'll teach you a conspiracy that will make your hair curl. They all wanted him dead. The mob, the company. LBJ. Shit, the son-of-a-bitch LBJ most of all. The oilmen, Hoover--they didn't buy this "New Frontier" shit. They wanted the "Old Frontier"--because they owned it! Joe Kennedy was a back-stabbing bastard and his Harvard kids never worked a day but wanted to preach to us about Poverty. I'd kill him again if I had the chance. I was THERE in Dallas and I wasn't shooting no comic book Italian rifle. I was shooting for my comrades, my brothers. And I've never been afraid to say it: 'we got the son of a bitch.'

INDIO (cont.)

(He sings "El Indio.")

"El Indio"

I was born  
in deep Mexico  
dark as shadow  
they called me El Indio

Washington  
wore a stiff white shirt  
while my fatigues  
got black  
with blood and dirt

In Guatemala  
I made my bones  
the reds ran scared  
from the name El Indio

I killed as swift  
as a snake can strike  
watched each one fall before they felt  
the fatal bite

we had Cuba  
in the palm of our hands  
but Senor President

pissed his pants

when I get drunk  
I may talk big  
but those bullets in Dallas  
were fired from the Bay of Pigs

call it payback  
or conspiracy  
either way I say  
we took care of that S.O.B.  
Didn't we  
Didn't we  
Didn't we

(INDIO strides off the stage  
triumphantly. THE SINGER returns,  
warily, making sure INDIO has gone.)

#### THE SINGER

You can see this is a dangerous game. But then any asshole these days can say he took the killshot. Indio is a big boy, and a nasty one. I wouldn't mess with him. But talk is talk and conspiracy grows in a vacuum. I'd still put my money on Lucien Marti. But why get into a pissing match over it? The theories get wilder every year. My personal favorite is the "Two Oswalds" theory. I don't know which tin-foil-hat dreamed this one up, but they say there were two Oswalds in Dallas. The real Oswald and either a Soviet or Company double. Call one Lee and the other Harvey. So Lee's watching the motorcade while Harvey's making the killshot. Lee's taking a breather in the Texas Movie Theater while Harvey's gunning down Patrolman Tippit. Lee's faithful to his wife Marina while Harvey's living it up with Jack Ruby and his strippers. As they say in mathematics, the permutations are endless. One theory claims that Lee and Harvey existed in parallel universes which temporarily collided putting them in the same space and time. I guess that makes as much sense as any of the others.

(THE SINGER waltzes off the stage,  
whistling as the twins LEE OSWALD and  
HARVEY OSWALD take center stage. They  
are both wearing a windbreaker and khaki  
pants as worn on the day of the  
assassination. They spend a moment  
staring at each other, walking around  
each other, sizing one another up. At

first they think they are simple looking into a mirror or having some kind of schizophrenic hallucination, but soon realize that the other is a double—both independent and dependent on their thoughts and actions. They mimic each other's moments at first and then proceed to dance in strict choreography ala Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. As they dance, they sing "Lee and Harvey" in duet taking turns with the verses and singing harmony on the refrain.)

LEE OSWALD and HARVEY OSWALD  
(They sing "Two Oswalds" as lopsided duet.)

"Two Oswalds"

we don't pretend  
to understand

two universe collide  
it happen all the time

tell me who's at fault  
for these two Oswalds

there's one named Lee and one Harvey  
living the same life oppositely

and we have two bodies  
and we have two minds  
but there's only one soul  
on the line

now lee's a double spy  
wants save the president's life

but harvey's here to do a job  
doesn't really care whose side he's on

lee is in the lunchroom  
while harvey's taking aim  
and there's nothing left  
that either one can change

lee's watch has stopped  
and Harvey kills a cop

call the police there's no release  
just a 38 slug from Jack Ruby

and space will sunder time  
and time will split with space  
as Lee and Harvey Oswald  
finally embrace

(After they have finished singing, LEE  
and HARVEY dance an extended combination  
tarantella/tango as THE BAND switches  
to "Two Oswalds" to a samba beat. Stage  
fades to black.)

SCENE 3

(Video screen fades in on image of JACKIE KENNEDY during the swearing in of LBJ aboard Air Force One. Montage of images from the funeral procession and burial of JFK follows.

Spotlight rises on JACKIE KENNEDY at center stage. She appears, in pink suit and pearls. She talks, purring. But a real heart shines through.)

JACKIE KENNEDY

Jack was never a perfect man—as I knew all too well. I let the Old Man know that if Jack were going to fool around on me, there would be “costs.” So I owned the White House. I made it high culture after those grubby Republican years—from Casals to Cassini. The Old Man grumbled about the cost of my clothes, but he paid. It was business, you see. And the Old Man understood business in a way Jack never did. Because I loved Jack—who couldn't love Jack? I knew I could never give him all that he wanted, he craved. Now we would classify it as some sort of sex addiction. Back then? A bad habit. But he loved me. He truly did. And the children. Oh, he was wonderful with them.

But he had never lived in the real world. He had never gotten the chance to use his talents. That's why he let Bobby push back--against those horrible unspeakable people. But this wasn't the Harvard-Yale football game. John had never been a businessman. He didn't understand consequences.

So they killed him. I watched them kill him. His blood and brains splattered all over my Chanel suit. Goddamn them for that. They made his death into a spectacle. They made me into a spectacle.

But when John died, he transmogrified. They killed a man but made a myth. Turned John into Attis, Mithra, Krishna, Dionysius, Jesus Christ, King Arthur. It shocked me as much as anyone.

But I had my revenge. He was a god now and I made them bow. Even Lyndon, pathetic, troll-like Lyndon, had to bow. They all had to bow down before this idol, whom I had known—most simply and beautifully—as a man.

JACKIE KENNEDY

(She sings "Widow's Song.")

"Widow's Song"

I signed up for the altar  
I signed up with a kiss  
but never in my darkest night  
did I ever dream  
it would come to this

He was the type of man a woman  
shouldn't dare to love  
though there were night I cursed his soul  
in the morning the sun  
always came up whole

and though he's gone his spirit seems  
to seduce me in my dreams  
he looks so young  
so frail and thin  
and impossibly innocent

I walk past winter monuments  
all Washington's a tomb  
trying hard to remember  
the time when the cherry trees  
were all in bloom

and though he's gone his spirit seems  
to seduce me in my dreams  
he looks so young  
so frail and thin  
and impossibly innocent

(Toward the middle of the song, THE MOTHER enters stage left and watches. THE WATCHER does not see her at first, but gradually grows aware of her shadow, her substance. The spotlight fades to black as the song ends and JACKIE KENNEDY waves goodbye to the audience. Spotlights rise on THE MOTHER alone with THE WATCHER.)

THE WATCHER

The boy go to sleep?



THE MOTHER

He's waiting for you.

THE WATCHER

I'll be up there. It's almost over.

THE MOTHER

It'll never be over.

THE WATCHER

(accepts the challenge in her comment)

You're right. It never will be. But that doesn't mean I'm going to accept it.

THE MOTHER

Accept what? It's over. It's history.

THE WATCHER

For me it's not over. For a lot of people like me it's not *history*.

THE MOTHER

Of course it will never be over for you. This is your life. It's like a fungus. It just keeps growing. Spreading its poison.

THE WATCHER

That's poetic.

THE MOTHER

Why can't you admit it? Just once. This is your only passion in life. Not your son, not our family, certainly not **ME!**

THE WATCHER

It's my fault, isn't it? It has nothing to do with those pills you take--the fact you can't sleep. The depression. That's my fault too!

THE MOTHER

Maybe it is!

THE WATCHER

(struggles to get out of his recliner, but can't quite make it.)

I'm going upstairs.

THE MOTHER

(laughing bitterly at his failure)

Go on. He's waiting.

THE WATCHER

(exhausted, falls back in the recliner.)  
You just want the easy answer. Scripted and ready to go. Like the Warren Commission. No questions. No dilemmas. Everything's *hunky dory*.

THE MOTHER

And you've traded your real life for something on TV. The great conspiracy! To give this worthless existence some sense!

(THE WATCHER angrily clicks on the video screen in response. It shows a computer-generated graphic of the magic bullet's trajectory.)

THE WATCHER

This is what you want. The Magic Bullet. Something to tie up all the loose ends. So that you never have to think about *anything*. It's prepacked, preprogrammed, predigested. Yeah, the Magic Bullet. Oswald fires it and it enters JFK's back, takes a right turn at his heart, exits out his chest and then hits John Connolly in the side before lodging in his wrist. Totally plausible!

THE MOTHER

Nobody cares! He's dead. Oswald's dead. Jackie's dead. We're all dead!

(After a brief fadeout, the spotlights go up on center stage where a chorus of dancing girls, dressed as human-sized bullets with only their bare arms and legs exposed, performs in kickline while the magic bullet trajectory plays in a loop on the video screen. While they kick and dance, an old-time TROUBADOUR strolls into the spotlight and sings "The Magic Bullet.")

THE TROUBADOUR

(He sings "The Magic Bullet.")

"The Magic Bullet"

the magic bullet flies  
it spins and turns  
and it leaps and dives

the magic bullet arrives  
hits its mark  
and slip right through his throat  
and makes a finger hole  
on the other side  
then veers off to the right  
like it had its own mind

the magic bullet says goodbye  
nuzzles in the governor's size  
as the women's screams rise  
like pigeon's cries

the magic bullet  
flies like a bumblebee  
breaks the laws of physics  
and geometry

the magic bullet  
is the star  
not the hidden gunmen  
or the target waiting  
for the killshot  
in the open car

(After the song concludes the bullet-girls exit but the TROUBADOUR remains. THE SINGER reenters and nods patronizingly to the TROUBADOUR, who shows no interest in leaving the stage. The TROUBADOUR is in his element on stage and immediately addresses the audience.)

TROUBADOUR

You know, a lot of us loved John Kennedy. Even if we didn't vote for him. (laughs at his own joke). The man had style—and a honey of a wife. Nobody I knew wanted him dead. Hell, us Texans knew what a bastard LBJ was . . . .

THE SINGER

(interrupting)

I don't mean to interrupt you, but you do realize that there's a whole show going on here?

TROUBADOUR

Hell, I know there's a show! It didn't start picking up till I got here!

THE SINGER

Thanks for the compliment.

THE TROUBADOUR

You're welcome, young man. But don't worry—you got time, you'll grow into it.

THE SINGER

What do you mean "it"?

THE TROUBADOUR

Show business!

(A spotlight comes up on THE BAND. The TROUBADOUR nods back, recognizing each member.)

THE TROUBADOUR (cont.)

How you boys feeling tonight? You the only ones keeping this thing alive, ain't ya?

(THE BAND laughs.)

THE TROUBADOUR (cont.)

Don't worry, I'll try to get you boys a better gig next time.

(THE BAND laughs again, but THE SINGER cuts them short. The spotlights fade out and THE BAND is in the dark.)

THE SINGER

Alright, you've had your fun, Harold. We gotta keep this train on time.

THE TROUBADOUR

(Angry at being called by his first name)  
Hellfire, boy, you never rode a train in your life!  
And you singing about John Kennedy. I bet you weren't even alive. I LIVED in Dallas. I PLAYED The Carousel Club. And let me tell you it *spun*.

(He laughs at his own pun, but THE SINGER is genuinely interested.)

THE SINGER

So you knew Jack Ruby?

THE TROUBADOUR

You mean Jacob Rubenstein? That was his real name. He was a bad guy, or lets say, he had some bad guy friends. But he ran a clean joint. Clean girls too (winks to audience). He paid us musicians in cash. We loved him for that.

(Cheers from THE BAND.)

THE TROUBADOUR (cont.)

Tell 'em, boys! I bet you ain't getting cash tonight.

THE SINGER

So what was Jack like?

THE TROUBADOUR

A crazy son-of-a-bitch. Carried around two little lapdogs. Hell, I'm not sure he wasn't screwing 'em. There were *that close*. But the damned things shit everywhere. The girls would complain—they be dancing the hoochie and step in dog-shit. But still they loved the guy.

THE SINGER

So did you know he was in with the Mob?

THE TROUBADOUR

We knew he was connected. Hell, the man got his start as Al Capone's bouncer. He wadn't no Texan, that's for sure. But we didn't think he was any big deal . . . .

THE SINGER

Until . . . .

THE TROUBADOUR

Until we sitting around watching our TVs like good Americans. Trying to get a look at this commie pinko rat that killed the President. And we finally get a look at this guy, black eye and everything. And he's nothing but a runt in this white t-shirt and khaki pants. Crying he's a patsy and that he didn't do it. And the police is perp-walking him out the basement—I can still remember those Trooper Stetsons they wore. And lo and behold, who should come out of the shadows, among all these lawmen and troopers and newspeople, but this strange guy in a fedora hat. Looked like something out of Jimmy Cagney movie.

(laughs so drily if might be a cough)

THE TROUBADOUR (cont.)

And it was *our Jack*. Jacob Rubenstein. Jack Ruby. And he's killing the guy who killed Kennedy. Live assassination TV. That was reality TV--right there on the little screen. History. *Our Jack* . . . .

(The video screen plays a loop of Ruby shooting Oswald. Spotlight comes up on JACK RUBY as spotlight on TROUBADOUR fades. RUBY wears a mob-style fedora and suit he was wearing the day he killed OSWALD.)

JACK RUBY

Yes, my given name is Jacob Rubenstein. Big Al give me the nickname Jack Ruby. That was back in Chicago. Before Momo--Mr. Sam Giancana--took over. There's a big difference. Al Capone didn't mind getting his hands dirty. He remembered a friend. Shit, I'm bouncing at one of his clubs and he'd stroll in like he was just any guy. Him and me would beat the living shit out of some drunk Bohunk. He did it for the fun of it. The Exercise.

But Momo was like Lord Hail Caesar. Cause he *made* Jack Kennedy president. Old Joe Kennedy come begging favors. "Momo, will you get me Illinois. Momo, will you get me West Virginia." And Momo done it. It was a deal. A blood deal. And Jack Kennedy turned on Momo. Let his little prick of a brother Bobby fuck with Hoffa, and Carlos Marcello too--deported him from the fucking country!

You don't fuck with Carlos. He's old world. Runs New Orleans--and there ain't a city more *run* than New Orleans. Shoulda shot Jack Kennedy there, goddammit!

But Carlos got his finger up Santos Trafficante's ass and Santo's got his finger up Momo's ass. Which leaves a little old asshole like me, Jack Ruby, right in the middle of this clusterfuck. Christ, why couldn't they have offed Kennedy in Miami? Make it Santos' problem. But no, it has to come down in Dallas. Put my balls in the goddamn ringer.

So they hit Kennedy and I suddenly got Momo, Santos, and Carlos breathing down my fucking neck. They tell me, this thing is fucked up and gotta to clean it up. Was it my mess?! Hell no. I say, let your CIA motherfuckers do it. Let your Cubans. But no, Jack

Ruby, it's your mess. But I've got my dick in a vise and I can't pull out now. Goddammit, I should have shot weaselly eyed Oswald in the fucking face the first time I ever laid eyes on him . . . .

So I fucked and got fucked. But hey that's the story of the mob. The story of this country. And I'm gonna sing this fucking song and then I'm gonna get the hell out of here. Fuck Sam Giancana. Fuck Santos Trafficante. Fucking Carlos fucking Marcello. And fuck Earl Warren and his Warren Commision. Fuck LBJ, the FBI and the CIA. And fuck the Cubans. All of them, their whole fucking island.

(As RUBY sings, the video loops the TV footage of RUBY shooting OSWALD. During the middle of the song, THE CHILD reenters the stage and resumes his seat stage left. THE WATCHER is so engrossed by the song that he is not aware of him.)

JACK RUBY (cont.)  
(Jack Ruby sings "Jack Ruby.")

"Jack Ruby"

Carlos said someone gotta do it  
someone gotta do it quick  
before that punk starts pissing his pants  
crazy little commie prick

Carlos said I'll make you a hero  
everyone will know your name  
no one will blame you  
if they were in your shoes  
man, they'd do just the same

Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby

Carlos said I got judges in my pocket  
senators, generals, the fucking president  
you'll do a little time  
sing your monkey shines  
and we'll get you off with an insanity  
defense

Jack Ruby

Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby

You'll be bigger than Sinatra  
Caesar's Palace on New Year's Eve  
say you did it for his wife  
say you did it for his kids  
say you did it for the American Dream

Carlos said someone gotta do it  
and that someone's looking just like you  
you know I know your brother  
sister and your mother  
and I'd hate to see the damage  
the boys would do

Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby  
Jack Ruby

(As the song ends, RUBY looks around furtively and makes a getaway into the shadows, stage left. The loop of OSWALD's assassination fades in as THE MOTHER enters. She is shocked by what THE CHILD is watching and covers his eyes with her hands.)

THE MOTHER

(to the WATCHER)

Do you realize what your son is watching?

THE WATCHER

(as if awaking from a dream)

Boy, I'm coming up to tuck you in.

THE MOTHER

He's down here!

THE WATCHER

(upset with himself)

Son, you shouldn't watch this. I told you this isn't for children.

THE CHILD

(struggling to free himself from THE MOTHER's grip)

But this is history, it's the presidents!



THE MOTHER

Hold still! Don't you fight me!

THE WATCHER

Do as your mother says!

(On the video screen the montage of the OSWALD assassination morphs into a montage of the KENNEDY funeral. These include still and moving images of his casket lying in state, the funeral mass, the caisson with casket rolling down Washington streets, the assembled dignitaries walking behind, the riderless horse Black Jack, the gravesite. THE CHILD wrestles free of THE MOTHER's grip. He watches, mesmerized. The MOTHER too is mesmerized by the flow of images. THE WATCHER as well. All three are separate but joined together by the common experience: THE CHILD, stage left, THE MOTHER, wandering to the center, and THE WATCHER, stage right. This is the rite, the ritual, that binds time and history into eternity's endless tape loop. They all watch as if frozen.

THE SINGER sings "CAISSON" although he is only as a silhouette at the rear of the stage. The primary visual focus is on the video screen montage with THE CHILD, THE MOTHER and THE WATCHER all subject to its self-annihilating imagery.

THE SINGER

(He sings "Caisson.")  
"Caisson"

In the Capitol rotunda he lay in state  
in a flag-draped coffin  
with the folk all in line  
for over ten miles  
for the last crowned King of Ireland

kings and queens princes and chiefs  
prime ministers and presidents  
down the long steps  
into the street  
as the band played the navy hymn

Black Jack the riderless horse  
danced with impatience  
as the six matched grays  
pulled the weight  
of the coffin in the caisson

like death-ship sail widow's black veil  
billowed with the ill wind  
except for the horseshoes  
and the drumbeat  
all Washington fell silent

Now Oswald was dead and mass it was read  
from book of Ecclesiastes  
as the Preacher saith  
no one can knoweth  
why this has happened  
or what it does mean

they lowered him down in foreign ground  
in the Kingdom of Arlington  
and they lit a flame  
to honor his name  
the last crowned King of Ireland

when the mourners were gone  
two soldiers alone  
stood vigil at the gravesite  
and eternal flame flashed and guttered  
whispering secrets into the night

(As the song ends, and the video screen  
fades to black, THE MOTHER and THE  
WATCHER slowly rise to to their feet.  
THE CHILD remains seated, enraptured by  
the darkness—not realizing that the  
images have faded to black, perhaps still  
seeing them in his head like a waking  
dream. THE MOTHER and THE WATCHER stare  
at the blank screen while they speak.

THE MOTHER

(blankly)

He doesn't need to be watching this.

THE WATCHER

(gulps)

I know.

THE MOTHER

No one needs to be watching this.

THE WATCHER

(mechanically)

I know.

THE MOTHER

Is there nothing else?

THE WATCHER

But this?

THE MOTHER

Yes. *This.*

THE WATCHER

(turning to THE MOTHER)

I don't know. There other channels. It's almost over.

THE MOTHER

(turning to THE WATCHER—sadness  
overcoming the anger in her voice)

But it's never over. And will never be over. Doesn't  
that drive you crazy?

THE WATCHER

Maybe we're all crazy. Lost and crazy.

(The video screen shows OSWALD's widow  
MARINA. She is giving an interview and  
there includes a montage of LEE HARVEY  
OSWALD and MARINA in happier times. As  
lovers.

As THE CHILD mutely watches the video  
screen, THE WATCHER rises from his chair,  
with remarkable ease, almost like a  
spirit floating to heaven. THE MOTHER  
floats ballerina-like toward him and they  
join hands in center stage. They dance  
together in a slow-motion combination of  
jitterbug, shag, ballroom and slow dance  
to the song "Lee and Marina"--sung by THE  
TROUBADOUR and THE GYPSY, who appear at  
edge of the stage, dressed like a  
Country-and-Western husband-and-wife duo,  
watching lovingly and rocking slowly to  
the beat. THE WATCHER and THE MOTHER  
dance around THE CHILD, who remains

spellbound by the images on the SCREEN.

THE TROUBADOUR and THE GYPSY  
(sing "Lee and Marina")

"Lee and Marina"

lee and marina  
marina and lee  
ex-patriot soldier  
and daughter of the KGB  
a man with no country  
a girl far from home  
living with strangers  
in love but alone

Lee and Marina  
Marina and Lee  
they want to get out  
but he's in too deep  
Cuba is friendly  
weather is nice  
but they must wait  
like children  
outside the gate  
of paradise

(As the song ends, all of the PLAYERS enter and form a single line across the front of the stage. They link arms with THE CHILD, THE MOTHER and THE WATCHER, who stand at the center. THE SINGER stands out front, and leads in the singing of "Dealey Plaza." The video screen shows contemporary images of Dealey Plaza the Sixth Floor Museum, the Grassy Knoll, the X-mark on the street where JFK was shot, etc. The final frame freezes on the X-mark. The PLAYERS and THE SINGER takes a bow.

THE SINGER with PLAYERS  
(They sing "Dealey Plaza.")

"Dealey Plaza"

They come from everywhere  
and everywhere between  
to see what they  
think they've seen

walk the sidewalk  
prowl the grassy knoll  
look up and down and all around  
take a picture and then they go

It's Kennedy it's Oswald  
lucky seven and the eight-ball  
it's Oswald it's Kennedy  
born twins in the womb of history

no books now  
in the book depository  
it's a museum  
full of everybody's  
where-were-you story

and there's a gift shop  
with a guy from Germany  
saying, "Ich bin ein son-of-a-bitch"  
to a tour-group of Japanese

It's Kennedy it's Oswald  
lucky seven and the eight-ball  
it's Oswald it's Kennedy  
born twins in the womb of history

you want answers  
you're in the wrong place  
you want mystery  
you can look Dealey Plaza  
in the face

they come from everywhere  
and everywhere between  
to see what they  
will never ever see

It's Kennedy it's Oswald  
lucky seven and the eight-ball  
it's Oswald it's Kennedy  
born twins in the womb of history

THE SINGER (cont.)

(to audience)

Thank you all for coming tonight. I hope we have answered your questions and questioned your answers. You know, old JFK probably said it best: "History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future." History was certainly John

Kennedy's relentless master. But it's hard to imagine that there's no present--just a neverending Mobius strip of past and future. But who *really* knows? We are all linked together in history. The assassination reveals that--even if it reveals nothing else. John Kennedy died and Oswald too. Jack Ruby and all the others--collateral damage. What could they know? What do we know? History unfolds and like a match each moment is struck and blown out--snuffed. Still we can never get enough. We watch our shadows play, we sing the notes that fly away, and we are done. Or are we? We'll let the poets, historians, preachers and philosophers argue that. Let the ages roll, let us rest our souls, for--if nothing else--are we not, if not forever at least for now, all ONE?

(Fadeout.)